



**Press Release – For Immediate Release**

## **Hard-hit museum gains lifeline in fight for survival**

**Essex, July 18 2024:** Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome in Essex, Europe’s largest surviving First World War aerodrome, has gained a lifeline in its fight for survival.

The embattled museum, whose very existence has been threatened by recent water company works closing their Hackman’s Lane access road, has managed to have the works and associated diversions removed.

Essex and Suffolk Water have halted their project, removing all obstructions and returning full access to the museum and other affected businesses on the vital road.

CEO of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Ian Flint, is overjoyed: “The works being removed means we have a lifeline. We may get through this yet! Of course, we are still waiting for absolute confirmation that the works will not return, and we have still to find thousands of pounds to survive, but for now, at least our supporters can get to us!”

The museum has launched a crowd funding appeal to counter the financial effects of the road closures. In the short time since it went live, letters of support are already coming in from individual supporters as well as museums in England and Europe.

Senior figures from the charity have met with Essex County Council Leader Councillor Kevin Bentley. He has offered advice and suggestions as to how the £30,000 hole in the charity’s income budget could be met, as well as committing to an ongoing dialogue of support.

The charity is also meeting with Essex and Suffolk Water owners, Northumbrian Water, to identify ways that they could possibly support the aerodrome in these difficult times.

Ian added: “We are very grateful that the senior leadership of the stakeholders are meeting with us. We are hopeful that we may survive long enough to negotiate with them all some kind of support package – but it is very early days. Right now, we need our community to support us in even great numbers with their visits or donations. The first hurdle may be behind us but there are many more ahead. The threat to our survival hasn’t passed.”

After Essex and Suffolk Water began significant water mains work in April near Hackman’s Lane main entrance to the museum, the charity saw a 50 per cent drop in income as hundreds of potential visitors gave up after being turned away or trying to navigate the labyrinth of diversions to get to the museum.

Dan Snow, popular historian and long-time Patron of the museum, is heartened by the progress: “The outpouring of support for Stow Maries clearly indicates how valuable it is to the people of Essex. It is just as important to our national heritage, so I am very happy to see that some progress is being made with the right people, to rescue it from disaster.”

Ends

Further information from the museum by contacting Ian on [ian.flint@stowmaries.org.uk](mailto:ian.flint@stowmaries.org.uk)

**Notes for editors:**

- Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Hackman’s Lane, Purleigh, CM3 6RN is open from 10am until 4pm, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. To check out their packed events programme or to make a donation to their survival, visit [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk)
- A campaign to save the site in 2012 led to its purchase, following a generous grant from the Heritage Memorial Fund. It was placed in the care of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, a registered charity.
- Today the museum, still an operational airfield, is supported and maintained by over 100 volunteers. [repeat of opening days and times deleted]
- More information about Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome can be found at [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk)
- Images: Dave Davis